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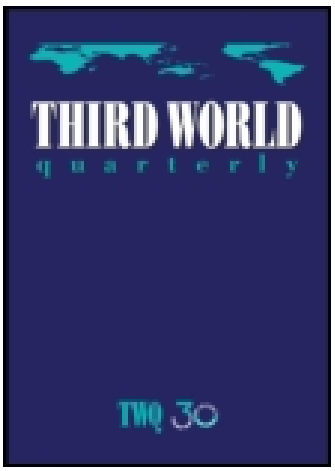

Third World Quarterly
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ctwq20

Capitalist Philanthropy and Hegemonic Partnerships

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Published online: 05 Jul 2012.

To cite this article: Behrooz Morvaridi (2012) Capitalist Philanthropy and Hegemonic Partnerships, Third World Quarterly, 33:7, 1191-1210, DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2012.691827

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2012.691827

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Third World Quarterly, Vol. 33, No. 7, 2012, pp 1191–1210

Routledge
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Capitalist Philanthropy and Hegemonic Partnerships

BEHROOZ MORVARIDI

ABSTRACT *Over the past 10 years individual capitalists have become increasingly involved in philanthropy, setting up charitable foundations targeted at helping to reduce social problems such as poverty, disease and food security. This form of neoliberal capitalist philanthropy is both politically and ideologically committed to market-based social investment through partnerships, to make the market work or work better for capital. The new structures of philanthropy have received much praise in the media for imbuing capitalist business principles into the non-profit sector and for their potential for social transformation. While philanthropic activities may be considered worthy in themselves, this article examines the relationship between giving and business interest and the agency associated with neoliberal capitalist philanthropy. It questions partnerships between philanthropists and private corporations and their motivations for engaging in poverty-related philanthropy. The discussion focuses on capitalist philanthropic foundations' involvement in the process of agricultural commodification in sub-Saharan Africa through the New Green Revolution and genetically modified (GM) technologies.*

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Economic globalisation has brought about extraordinary capital accumulation and concentration of wealth in the hands of a few 'super rich' individuals, while at the same time inequality and absolute poverty have increased significantly. For the first time in history the number of billionaires has reached roughly 1210, who between them have a total net wealth of $4.5 trillion.[1] Billionaires at the top of the list who have been actively involved in giving to charities and setting up foundations come from both the global North and the global South. In October 2010 about 40 US billionaires signed the 'Giving Pledge' through which they agreed to donate half their wealth to philanthropic foundations either during their lifetime or posthumously. Bill Gates and Warren Buffet have between them donated $62 billion to poverty reduction objectives. Azim Premji, an Indian software billionaire, has devoted $2 billion to an endowment fund for education. Other philanthropic individuals, whose wealth comes from entrepreneurial activity, include the Hariri family (Lebanon), the Tata family (India), Carlos Slim Holu (Mexico), Miloud Chaabi (Morocco), Patrice Motsepe (South

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ISSN 0143-6597 print/ISSN 1360-2241 online/12/071191–20
© 2012 *Southseries Inc.*, www.thirdworldquarterly.com
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2012.691827

Africa), Sabanci (Turkey), Peter Kellner (Czech Republic), Lee Kun Hee (Japan), Omidyar (USA), the founder of eBay and Richard Branson (UK), to name just a few. The new philanthropists, some of whom earned much of their wealth in the Silicon Valley and dot.com boom, have developed a shared approach to solving the problems of poverty, branded the 'California Consensus'.[2] This consensus is anchored in applying innovation, technology and modern management methods to solving poor people's problems under the overall objective of reducing global poverty.

The 'California consensus' asserts that private aid is more effective than official development assistance and its framework for solving the problem of global poverty and food security is a network of public–private and philanthropic partnerships. According to Bishop and Green,[3] the leading proponents of neoliberal capitalist philanthropy who, in fact, coined the concept 'philanthro–capitalism', what we are witnessing are new 'global movements' initiated by individual capitalists who want to do 'good' and help the poor to make the world a better place in which to live. Bishop and Green argue that this type of philanthropy is 'strategic' and 'innovative', in that it applies business principles to giving: 'The past couple of decades have been a golden age for capitalism, and today's new philanthropists are trying to apply the secrets behind that money-making success to their giving'.[4] The political motivation for this kind of giving aspires to apply competitive principles to the world of civil society on the assumption that what works for the market should work for citizen action too.[5] However, critics have pointed out that, within a civil society responsibility framework, civil society organisations and traditional philanthropists provide services as the non-profit sector of the marketplace and as such are independent of corporate economic interests and the state. In this context and political economy approach civil society exists as a force in the Gramscian sense (albeit not in the class sense), or one that operates to 'counterbalance' the power of states, private corporations and neoliberal economic globalisation. It should not be another arm of the state or private corporations in disguise. In the words of Fontana, 'the formation and organization of public opinion within civil society are central to the generation of both a prevailing hegemonic system and counter-hegemonic groups and movements'.[6]

An overlooked, but very pertinent question we should be asking is why the 'mega-rich' give away portions of their wealth to invest to assist the poor? Is this an act of altruistic giving, for the good of society? Or is it to sustain the ideology of market-led capitalist development? Whose interests are being served? What is the political and ideological motivation of capitalist philanthropy? Answers to these questions depend on how philanthropy is conceptualised. Before I embark on examining these questions from an empirical base, we must first look at philanthropy and giving from a conceptual perspective.

Altruism or hegemony?

Liberalism of one sort or another argues that philanthropy is driven by altruism and the desire to help improve the experiences of others. Whether

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for the giver's pleasure and satisfaction or as an act of altruism, philanthropy is where the person involved is committed to a cause from which they are not likely to benefit personally. Some philanthropists are driven by religious commitment and a sense of moral responsibility to make the world a better place to live. Singer argues that individuals of reasonable income and wealth are morally obliged to give a proportion of their income to charities that aim to combat global poverty. This prescription for poverty reduction relies on the individual person's conscience as the 'ultimate unit of moral concern'.[7] Attributing a moral value to giving and philanthropy, in the Kantian sense, makes them not simply acts of kindness or compassion, but acts of duty based upon the universal belief that suffering is bad. Singer cites the generosity of Americans, who give $306 billion to charities each year, as evidence that individuals with a reasonable income should contribute between 5% and 15% of their income towards global poverty reduction.[8] Others argue that givers are incentivised by a number of different drivers, such as individual or corporate tax benefit, or managing reputational risk and using charitable causes as a means of gaining respect and credibility[9]. A necessary distinction must be made between the charitable donations of individual working people and those of capitalist philanthropists. The former tend to make donations towards specific projects based on moral decisions, with giving embedded to varying degrees in everyday life. Individuals can also make genuinely 'disinterested judgements about moral worth and can adopt an impartial and critically reflexive instance towards others'.[10] Whichever the case, giving by individual wage earners is altruistic. Capitalist philanthropists, however, are more likely to base decisions about giving on an analysis of the benefits both to others and themselves in terms of power and influence, including political and economic control of outcomes.

Many capitalist philanthropists have built their wealth by trading on the gap between the rich and the poor. Therefore there can be a paradoxical tension between their engagement in philanthropic activities that help to ease conditions of poverty and their business activity. Does this mean that giving serves to ease the capitalist's conscience? For Edwards the practice of helping others hinges on notions of self-transformation and status in the social corporate responsibility stakes—'feed the poor, get a name'.[11] Even Friedman, one of the 'neoliberal ideologues' and architects of free market ideals, argued that the social responsibility of the capitalist is to make a profit and maximise economic welfare, and that any deviation from this is therefore morally problematic.[12] In a similar vein, but with different political and ideological objectives, Marx believed that capital and social responsibility do not resonate, because the main motivation of capital is profit maximisation.

Gramsci vehemently believed that philanthropy was an instrument of hegemony by which the capitalist class maintained its control of the market, workers and peasants, and one which served to avert attention away from the malevolence of the rich and the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few. In most cases hegemony is realised within the field of civil society. In other words philanthropic donations support the domination of politics by the powerful and this is effectively reinforced through consensus rather than

force.[13] Theoretically this article draws extensively on Gramsci's work and his conception of philanthropic hegemony.

Similar arguments are raised by Bourdieu, relating not only to class but also following Weber's perspectives on status. Bourdieu argues that explanations on giving and philanthropic activity are embedded in different forms of capital: economic (money and resources), social (networks or knowing influential people), cultural (linguistic and articulating on behalf of others), and symbolic (status). Some individuals have more access than others to different types of capital and appropriate strategies for using them. For Bourdieu the 'gratuitous gift does not exist'.[14] To all intents and purposes, the act of giving assumes either some form of reciprocal response or is motivated by the status that it can generate. In this conception philanthropic activities are consciously driven by specific identified goals and strategies, shaped by 'personal character and qualities, in the social field...and (its) external relations with other fields eg business, politics, religion and its grounding in the class system'.[15]

In Bourdieu's theoretical framework capitalist philanthropists embody not only economic capital, but also symbolic capital. The relationship is synergistic—philanthropists both use and gain symbolic capital through philanthropic activity; in other words they convert economic capital into symbolic capital and symbolic capital functions to reproduce economic capital. What distinguishes symbolic capital from other types of capital is that it acts as a source of power to the field of participants through values, recognition, prestige and reputation. Symbolic capital provides the agent or philanthropist with influence, power and hegemony within the relationship with the receiver. Philanthropists' status, or symbolic capital, is often enhanced by the media and public relations agency that they employ, to the point that there are examples where the media presents philanthropists as having a form of celebrity status, thus generating free publicity about them. A good example is the media attention paid to Bill Gates and Warren Buffet when they announced their decisions to donate a large proportion of their wealth to charitable causes. Bill Gates' philanthropic activities in health, such as in the anti-malaria field, have gained him a global reputation for doing much for the well-being of humanity, further reinforcing his individual status and the status of associated corporate organisations. As a result he has been able to establish a network that involves other rich capitalists in philanthropic work, as we shall see in the case study below. In short, capitalist philanthropists with a disposition to social action can appear to depoliticise and neutralise contested fields through the reaffirmation of idealistic generalities.[16]

Under neoliberalism the whole notion of capitalist philanthropy is embedded in the idea of reducing state intervention and responsibilities and devolving power to non-state actors. There is a perception that involving non-state actors, such as private corporations, philanthropists and civil society organisations, in development issues can lead to more effective outcomes, through a 'sharing of responsibilities'. This idea hinges on the view that social justice and the redistribution of resources to address poverty do

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not necessarily have to be achieved through a direct relationship between the state and civil society. Instead, linking philanthropy to the poor, whether directly to individuals or through partnerships regardless of the location in which they live, is considered to be a new conceptualisation of state and civil society.

This 'self-development' approach, according to neoliberal economists, involves three steps: 1) raising money from individuals or philanthropists; 2) activities that deal directly with beneficiaries and not through governments; and 3) transferring funds to the poor.[17] The suggestion is that private aid is more likely to go to the people who really need it if it bypasses government bureaucracy, thereby generating 'more benefit for beneficiaries. The perceived benefits of such individual giving are that it does not require a costly government bureaucracy on the giving side and on the receiving side there is less opportunity for money to be siphoned off into the pockets of corrupt government officials.'[18] Thus philanthropy appears to be good for equity and for poverty, while imposing few budgetary costs. In this conception it would seem that philanthropy in its different forms confers a moral obligation upon the organisation or individual involved to contribute towards the objectives of social justice and development for the well-being of individuals, communities and wider society in ways that, according to the World Bank, are 'good for business' and 'good for development'.[19]

Capitalist philanthropy, partnerships and the New Green Revolution

Global governance institutions not only support but often partner with capitalist philanthropists, promoting the idea of public–private philanthropic partnerships as pro-poor and therefore an appropriate model to drive greater equity. They disregard the way in which power is dispersed to different actors within such partnerships and the ways in which, partnerships disguise unequal power relations between public institutions and groups of individuals and the private corporations and philanthro-capitalists engaged in development activities.[20] The concept of partnership itself makes an important contribution to the consensus needed to sustain hegemony.

Philanthropic activities that transfer technology in the agricultural sector provide a salient example of legitimising partnership with private corporations as a vehicle to drive strategy, despite its inherent hegemony. In its 2008 *World Development Report* on agriculture the World Bank enthusiastically supports philanthropic activities that promote the increased productivity of smallholders as a means to achieving the overall objective of reducing poverty as part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). According to the World Bank, the MDGs could be accomplished if the state 'corrects market failures, regulates competition, and engages strategically in public–private partnerships to promote competitiveness in the agribusiness sector', and the integration of smallholders and rural workers into a wider market. Partnerships, for example, are used to make biotechnology products available to smallholders in areas such as sub–Saharan Africa (SSA), where the private sector currently has little commercial interest. Through complex

agreements that often incorporate an assets base, 'Biotechnology partnerships can link global and local actors. The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa has 14 such partnerships. Some partnerships also reflect the rise of new philanthropists, such as the Gates Foundation and the Syngenta Foundation which are associated with private biotechnology companies that provide both new sources of private funding and access to research tools and technologies.'[21]

The New Green Revolution in SSA is reshaping social relations and transforming rural production through the expansion of commodification to engage small farmers and peasants in the market. The objective is clear: 'Helping poor farming families grow more crops and get them to market is the world's single most powerful lever for reducing poverty and hunger'.[22] The strategy to achieve this restructuring of agriculture is investment in 'pro-poor market' approaches to capital inputs and in the research and development of new technologies. Since 2006 the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Gates Foundation) has dedicated $1.7 billion to assisting small family farmers. The bulk of this investment has been delivered through programmes associated with the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), which is also supported by the Rockefeller Foundation.[23] The strategy is to restructure agriculture through public–private partnerships with a particular focus on technology and innovation, as Bill Gates pointed out in a recent interview:

> Innovation in seeds brings small farmers new high-yield crops that can grow in a drought, survive in a flood, and resist pests and disease. Innovation in markets offers small farmers access to reliable customers. Innovation in agricultural techniques helps farmers increase productivity while preserving the environment—with approaches like no–till farming, rainwater harvesting and drip irrigation. Innovation in foreign assistance means that donors now support national plans that provide farming families with new seeds, tools, techniques and markets. This approach reduces overlap and keeps developing countries squarely in the lead.[24]

A typical example of philanthropic involvement in public–private partnerships is the Gates and Buffett Foundations' funding of the Water Efficient Maize for Africa, or WEMA project, led by the Kenya-based African Agricultural Technology Foundation, with partners including multinational corporations such as Monsanto, one of the world's largest producers of GM seeds (see below), the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT) and agricultural research systems in Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda. Monsanto has deployed breeding and biotechnology techniques to increase the drought tolerance of white maize in Eastern Africa. It claims that this will result in 'new white maize varieties that yield between 20 percent and 35 percent more during moderate drought, enough to help many keep hunger at bay. This yield enhancement during moderate drought is projected to be enough to reduce risks so that farmers can invest in fertilizer. The combined use of improved seeds and fertilizer boost the harvest—and, therefore, farmers' incomes'. [25] The company, of course, will profit as a result.

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The narrative used by AGRA, capitalist philanthropists, academics and private corporations involved in the New Green Revolution identifies some of the key issues that afflict the rural poor and cause food insecurity in SSA. They includes a growing population, land issues relating to property rights, infertile land and lack of capital to secure inputs, resulting in a low yield per hectare compared with other regions of the world. Agriculture in SSA is dominated by 33 million smallholding farmers and peasants, each cultivating less than two hectares of arable land.[26] Sixty-six percent of the population in SSA live on less than $1.25 dollar a day. The majority live and work in rural areas and rely on land as their main source of livelihood. However, land plots are getting smaller and increasingly fragmented because of population growth; this situation could worsen as population continues to grow (forecasts suggest growth from 790 million in 2005 to 1.8 billion by 2050[27]). Many farmers do not have freehold rights to their land or other assets to use as collateral to access credit for the purchase of capital inputs such as fertilisers and new seeds. Several organisations, including AGRA and philanthropic foundations working in this area, claim that, because productivity has not kept pace with the growing population, resulting in worsening poverty, hunger and malnutrition, the solution lies in increasing productivity through new technology, such as use of GM crops and new high-yield varieties and modern farming management. This would represent a shift in the existing rural structure.

AGRA's stated goal is to help smallholding farmers 'boost their productivity, increase their incomes, and lift themselves and their families out of hunger and poverty'.[28] It encourages farmers to prioritise pro-poor marketable crops such as maize, millet, cassava and sorghum. A network of 'agro-dealers' has been established, comprising private companies, state agencies, philanthropists and NGOs, that works to secure smallholding farmers and peasants access to credit to enable them to purchase seeds, pesticides and fertilisers. The Agro Dealers Development Programme was first launched by AGRA in 2007 to integrate smallholdings into the market. It is currently active in Kenya, Ghana, Malawi and Tanzania. In a recent study of agriculture in Kenya the commodification process was found to have accelerated in regions where the agro-dealers network has been operating, and transforming engagements—'even seed aid for vulnerable farmers in food insecure areas is moving towards ''market-based'' approaches such as vouchers, which require the active participation of agro-dealers to redeem them for prescribed seeds and fertiliser'.[29]

The New Green Revolution in SSA follows a similar strategy to that used in Asia in encouraging famers to be consumers of capital inputs and new technology.[30] What distinguishes it from its predecessor is the long-term intention to replace traditional seeds with new varieties, including genetically modified seeds, for which the patent rights lie with the multinational corporation. One of AGRA's objectives is to facilitate farmers' access to high-yield seeds through the development of 100 new varieties of crops.[31] This is being delivered through its Africa Seed System Programme, launched in 2006 and into which the Gates Foundation has heavily invested. The vision is that

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smallholder farmers in Africa access new seeds through finance, markets and technology-transfer networks that cut across national borders and ecologies, facilitated by agro dealers and micro-credit. Rather than as producers, farmers are constructed as 'discerning ''customers'' or ''consumers'', able to engage actively in markets and with the right provision, adopt new seed varieties to improve their productivity'.[32] The idea is that immersing the farmer into the market through the framework of agro-business will lead to increased productivity, higher incomes and sustainable livelihoods. Despite the current push to spread GM technology, only three countries in Africa have adopted laws that allow the commercial planting of GM crops—South Africa, Burkina Faso and Egypt. However, since the first commercialisation of GM crops in 1996, field trials supported by companies involved in GM research and development have been carried out in a number of African countries, including Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Mali, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Cameroon, Morocco, Senegal and Ghana, in readiness for a wider roll-out. For example, new GM crops, such as maize and cassava, are being tested in Tanzania and the Tanzanian Cotton Board has also approved the introduction of Bt cotton.

The Rockefeller and Gates Foundations' ideological orientation towards a neoliberal approach to poverty reflects their capitalist origins. The promotion of technology as a key part of the solution resonates with modernisation theorists who believe that people desire to live in a modern society, with its technology, high standards of living, access to health and education and access to the wider world.[33] In agricultural development this translates into encouraging the integration of farmers and peasants into market-oriented economies to deliver economic growth and modernisation through new technologies and modern management techniques. The expectation is that over time, as farmers gain wealth, a class with property to protect will emerge and will increase demand for political participation. In several interviews Bill Gates has justified the Gates Foundation's intervention in rural development in Africa via new technology and GM crops:

> I have to confess—I've never been a farmer. Until fairly recently, I'd rarely set foot on a farm. So it would be fair to ask why I'm so committed to supporting small farmers. . .helping poor farming families is. . .the best way to fight poverty and hunger and feed a growing population. . .Yield per hectare is lower in Sub–Saharan Africa than other regions because the farmers do not have access to tools and techniques. By offering small farming families in Africa the modern technology, the least productive farms can come closer to the most productive.[34]

To encourage the poorest farmers to grow cash crops, a strategy is promoted that combines 'the best of what's worked in the past with new breakthroughs customised to the needs of small farmers'.[35]

This reflects a developmental ideology that bases its 'agrarian doctrine' on encouraging the productivity of smallholding farmers. It assumes that all markets can be accessed equally and that there is no subordination or exclusion of farmers and peasants, be it from markets, sources of production

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or wider economic relationships. This neoliberalist emphasis on reducing the exclusion of the poor tends to obscure the crucial issue of how poverty is created and reproduced and demonstrates a fundamental lack of understanding of the fact that poverty does not emerge because of exclusion but because of poor people's differential incorporation into market and economic and political processes.

Technical fixes, such as GM crops, do not adequately address the complex challenges of social relations in agriculture that often exacerbate social and environmental harm. When the focus is on technical solutions to poverty rather than structural constraints, roll-out is likely to be limited. Hanak and others, for example, point to numerous issues with micro-loans,[36] but these are not necessarily apparent in assessments of agro-dealer success in increasing access as this tends to only be measured by micro-loan uptake rates. Concerns include peer pressure to take up loans, even where there is evidence that this would exacerbate existing financial pressures and result in farmers sacrificing expenditure on family food to meet repayment schedules or 'self-exploitation' such as increased use of unpaid family labour. As packaged, microfinance has not in fact been targeted at the poorest farmers and they continue to be excluded from this form of support as they are universally judged to be unable to pay. Despite the aim to commodify or 'marketise' the poorest farmers, the reality is a shift from focus on the 'deserving poor' to one on the equally detrimental category of the 'easy to assist poor',[37] or the 'entrepreneurial poor', as noted in the Voices of the Poor publication of the World Bank.[38] Those whom the market cannot assist are left behind or, as a very last resort, supported with only minimal safety nets to ensure they 'survive'. The evidence is as yet unclear about how successful this manipulation of the market has been at producing the anticipated efficient outcomes. The indication is that its failure to significantly increase incomes has in turn contributed to high levels of poverty as well as high levels of pollution and environmental degradation. Excessive reliance on the market has gone hand in glove with increasing social frailty, and consequential social conflict, often associated with violence.[39]

Neoliberal capitalist philanthropic backers of pro-poor strategies are considering how business approaches can be extended to 'turn what has largely been a subsidised business into a profitable one'.[40] Philanthropy organisations such as the Omidyar Network see this as a way to attract more private capital into the development agenda.[41] The network funds microfinance, entrepreneurship and property rights, believing that this is the key to 'economic security, identity, and wealth creation'.[42] The organisational behaviour of the Omidyar Network typifies a changing rationale for giving to charitable causes. According to Omidyar, the founder of eBay:

> After a few years of trying to be a traditional philanthropist, I asked myself, 'if you are doing good, trying to make the world a better place, why limit yourself to non-profit?'. Although there is a separate chequebook for the foundation…the 'investment team' is free to put their money in either for-profit or

> non-profit projects. The team's main criterion is whether the investment will further the social mission.[43]

Other philanthropists acknowledge that agricultural investment in farming is ultimately about business:

> We're working to give poor farmers business assistance through new tools and technology and access to market and capital. This approach has nothing to do with the old aid model of donors and recipients. This is about business and their investment.[44]

In other words, capitalist philanthropy is aimed at the expansion of the capitalist market economy in rural areas on the basis that the development of capitalism in SSA is 'incomplete'[45] and requires interventions that facilitate the commodification process. Injections of capital into agriculture are considered to be positive even if they compromise traditional practice. Perhaps the most controversial examples of this are market-led land deals, where foreign investment is used to purchase land for large-scale agribusiness food production (rice, soya beans, maize), cultivation of biofuel crops, and other cash crops for export from Africa to other countries. This is seen as a key strategy for solving the agrarian question and managing food crises and supply of alternative energy sources. Large areas of fertile land have transferred ownership or are subject to long-lease arrangements with foreign investors, for in some cases up to 99 years. Governments, the World Bank, other global institutions and philanthropists support this neoliberal model of commodification where land is an essential component of market liberalisation. Bill Gates strongly believes that this all points in the right direction:

> Many of those land deals are beneficial, and it would be too bad if some were held back because of Western groups' ways of looking at things. Whenever somebody invests in Africa and actually builds infrastructure in Africa, they're the ones who are at risk. You can't take the infrastructure home! I'm not endorsing all these deals, but when capital is put into Africa, that's a good sign. Africa has to look at these things, but it shouldn't be viewed purely through Western eyes, because there's a real opportunity as the rest of the world looks to Africa.[46]

Traditional authority and forms of social organisation or customary rights to land are associated with a political administration that underpins rural, tribal identity. As such, they are perceived to be an obstacle to modern forms of social organisation and neoliberal development ideas that hinge on individual property rights. According to the neoliberal ideologue de Soto, property rights turn 'dead capital' into 'live capital'.[47] They can provide opportunities in the market for smallholding farmers and peasants to have access to credit and loans to support investment in land and inputs that could increase productivity. This assumption is rather narrow; not all poor people who have land titles and deeds will secure loans from commercial banks or micro-credit institutions. And while this model of property rights may apply in the context

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of small farmers, in other contexts it can be manipulated by the rich elites.[48] In the case of 'land grabbing' SSA foreign investors are reducing the local population's access to land and this is likely to have a disproportionate impact on the land rights of the poor, women and other vulnerable groups. The land issue is particularly complex in Africa because 75% of land continues to be governed under customary tenure and therefore lies outside state registered property and, by implication, the legal 'land market'. Land deals have been completed or are being negotiated with government or tribal leaders at the expense of local rural people and smallholding farmers who have been forced to either undergo enclosure or move to more marginal lands.[49] Effectively this is a new form of privatisation. Even though smallholders are excluded from the deals and many farmers are at risk of losing access to land and their main livelihoods, African governments have been keen to progress land deals if it encourages foreign development investment, as part of a rural development strategy. It is estimated that so far foreigners have invested more than $100 billion in land in over 50 African countries.[50]

Capitalist philanthropy and hegemonic partnerships

Using a Gramscian analytical framework, Karl and Katz provide relevant historical evidence of how the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations' philanthropic activities reinforced capitalist hegemony.[51] For Gramsci intellectuals played an important role in maintaining the fabric of capitalist society through their pursuit of research and the cultural practices that served the interests of the dominant group or class. At the turn of the (20th) century the 'the men of great wealth who created the first American foundations did...seek to create a 'hegemonic class' of intellectuals, who would support them in their views of industrial capitalism'.[52] Effectively these foundations have, since their inception, played a critical role in disseminating knowledge and ideas that reinforce the capitalist market economy and influence US foreign policy.[53]

In a historically different context new foundations operating in the development arena have similarly harnessed the support of respected research institutions. Table 1 lists organisations and institutions that have received funding from the Gates Foundation. Research grants are classified into six areas: market locality/area, farmers' productivity, market access, science and technology, policy and statistics, and advocacy and public policy. These research organisations and institutions help to disseminate the priorities of the 'elite' in the public space through their various activities, legitimising capitalist philanthropy and the building of a neoliberal consensus. The Gates Foundation has funded numerous research projects that support an agrarian doctrine associated with the New Green Revolution and pro-poor GM crops. How ideas are constructed and disseminated by these institutions to popularise GM technology as a poverty reducing tool, in the Gramscian sense, demonstrates a perpetuation of cultural hegemony.

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TABLE 1. Selected international grants awarded by Gates Foundation to universities and research institutions working on food security since 2008

Institution	Grants ($)	Project
Oxford University	1 390 190	To provide immediate relief to vulnerable communities affected by drought in Ethiopia
Oxford University	2 511 239	Advocacy and public policy: to promote the policy-relevant research and target media and communications
Oxford University	24 129 832	Nutrition programme
University of Pretoria	4 475 282	Agricultural development: to support policy research and to strengthen African agriculture
Oxford University	25 000	International Conference on Genomic Epidemiology of Malaria
Imperial College London	16 529 688	School feeding programme in Africa that promotes local agriculture and benefits smallholder farmers
Harvard	1 474 392	To benefit of science and technology for African agriculture by promoting discussion and dissemination in Africa
Institute of Development Studies UK	2 676 910	To support smallholder farmers in Africa and South Asia through impact planning and learning
Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture	12 730 748	To improve agricultural productivity ad wealth creation for smallholder farmers in Eastern and Southern Africa by developing an effective agricultural university: research and training
Cornell University	28 750 000	To develop new wheat varieties resistant to wheat rust, a disease that threatens up to 80% of African and Asian wheat varieties
University of Bristol	13 105 000	To research and develop a user-friendly, low-cost water quality test
University of Greenwich	13 345 671	To support sustainable and equitable improvements to cassava value chains and markets in Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda, Nigeria and Malawi
Donald Danforth Plant Science Centre in St. Louis, Missouri, USA	44 567 500	To develop bio-cassava seeds for use in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania

Source: Internet sites of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and listed institutions, accessed October August 2011.

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The Gates Foundation also sponsors advocacy projects in the media and other public forums that help to publicise and promote the policy relevance of its funded activities, for example in the *Guardian*'s International Development column. The Gates Foundation has in addition given generous grants to global governance institutions such the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), various international agriculture and food organisations and research institutions linked to the World Food Programme, such as the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, as shown in Table 2. This form of existing of hegemony necessitates some level of consensus in the construction of partnerships and opens a new space for capitalist philanthropy to exercise power and influence, institutionalising a market-based approach and business sector model in respect of aid and, within this strategy, the promotion of new technologies. According to Cox, these global institutions 'embody the rules which facilitate the expansion of hegemonic world orders; they are themselves the product of the hegemonic world order; they ideologically legitimate the norms of the world order; they co-opt the elites...and they absorb counter hegemonic ideas'.[54] This is evidenced by the work of international organisations such as the FAO, the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, the World Bank and the International Food Policy Research Institute, as well as of several academics, which has reached the scientific and policy compromise that GM or transgenic crops and related technologies can help small holding farmers to increase yield per hectare and hence increase agricultural productivity.[55]

Paarlberg, whose research was funded by the Rockefeller and Gates Foundations, strongly believes the African food crisis requires a solution based on a green revolution and the application of modern technology, such as new genetically engineered crop varieties, even though he acknowledges the challenge of integrating GM crops into the African farming system.[56] Glover, however, questions the origins of the narrative that GM crops and biotechnology are 'pro-poor' and suggests that the consensus that they benefit small farmers and contribute to poverty reduction in the South is over-optimistic and has over-raised people's expectations.[57] He presents compelling evidence of the supposed future benefits of GM technology that have been shaped by how the real impacts of technology among smallholder farmers in the global South have been interpreted and represented. The resulting positive conclusions drawn by lobby organisations, such as the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA)—a non-profit organisation funded by large corporations, and other analysts and academics, have reinforced public and policy debates about the merits of genetic technology.[58]

Sceptics, such as Scoone, argue that the success of GM technology is not as straightforward as presented, drawing on the narrative of national and transnational movements resistant to GM crops in many countries in global South, including Europe, India, South Africa and Brazil.[59] He argues that, where GM technology has been applied, in all cases commodification was already relatively well established and rich peasants and capitalist farmers were integrated into the market, despite the different socioeconomic and

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TABLE 2. Selected international grants awarded by Gates Foundations to global institutions for work on food security since 2008

Institution	Grants ($)	Project
World Savings Bank Institute	20 000 000	To provide finance services for the poor
World Food Programme	66 131 200	To improve market opportunities for smallholder farmers through expansion of food purchasing mechanism
World Bank	19 999 748	Financial services for the poor to support smallholders' access to agricultural finance
World Bank	30 000 000	To improve income and food security through improved public–private sector investment in the agriculture and rural sectors
World Bank	18,955 000	To add detailed agricultural modules to the World Bank's household survey panels in seven sub-Saharan African countries to provide a strong evidence base for policies, investments and evaluation over time.
UN FAO	6 569 304 5,053,663	To construct and apply a statistical framework and technology solutions ($6.5 million in 2007) for monitoring African agricultural production
International Institute of Tropical Agriculture	6 759 003	To promote scientific technologies for smallholder farmers in Kenya and Nigeria
International Centre for Tropical Agriculture	15,240,724	To provide accurate, information on soil resources and their management to support sound decision making
Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition	120 485 736	To contribute to improved nutrition and access to food as part of the Global Health Initiative
International Development Research Centre	40 000 000	Advocacy and public policy: to provide an advisory platform
International Development Research Centre, Canada	40 000 000	To provide a platform for evidence-based national development policy deliberations on agriculture, by strengthening independent policy research institutions in developing countries
The One Campaign	34 810 364	Advocacy and public policy: to promote agriculture, health and development in Africa
Oxfam America	11 712 100	To strengthen African agricultural economics research and support nearly 300 African students pursuing master's degrees in a dozen African universities

Source: Internet sites of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and listed institutions, accessed in October August 2011.

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institutional settings or agrarian contexts. In some locations evidence exists that GM seeds were too expensive for small or peasant farmers. Multinational corporations that develop new technologies, and therefore hold intellectual property or patent rights, set the costs for selling them and thereby determine their acquisition by both individuals and the global South in general. The market is monopolised by the likes of Monsanto, one of the world's largest producers of GM seeds, and Cargill,[60] a multinational food company, granting them control over production and prices in the global market. Global governance institutions, namely the World Trade Organization (WTO), have failed to address the application of the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement, which grants patent rights for the genetic resources of agricultural products to multinational companies, and ignores the rights of poor farmers to their own resources, such as seeds. With the multinationals monopolising the availability of seeds, farmers are forced by market imperatives to rely on external products.

It is hardly surprising that Monsanto has constructed the concept of 'pro-poor GM', which would alleviate hunger and poverty, to neutralise 'anti-GM campaigners' in the interests of business.[61] The rationalisation that GM is good for the poor has been explicitly used, both within and outside the company, to justify its investments in biotechnology and to attract the support of others, both financial and political. The company has also used its connections with philanthropists, such as the Gates Foundation, to positively endorse its activities. The *Guardian* recently reported that multinational corporations such as Monsanto, Bayer and other GM companies attempting to introduce GM crops into Europe (currently banned) had recruited 10 'big' personalities via a European lobby group to act as ambassadors for GM technology; these include Sir Bob Geldof, Lord Patten (Chancellor of Oxford University) and Kofi Annan. The lobby group suggested that protestors against GM crops were complacent and emotional and that GM producers had the world's interests at heart.[62] In reality, GM producers promote standardised, high-technology packages based on relatively few cash crops, such as cotton and maize: 'Instead of adapting the technology to suit the farmers' requirements, Monsanto expects smallholder farmers to change, using Monsanto's seed and herbicide inputs to make the transition to a more commercially oriented agriculture'.[63]

In 2009 Senator Robert Casey and Richard Lugar, working with organisations such as the Gates Foundation and Monsanto, sought to amend Section of 103A of the US Government Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to reflect the value of supporting global food insecurity. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved amendments in the Global Food Security Act 2009 that shifted the policy objectives of the US government to one that explicitly supports biotechnologies. The act endorses investment to:

> promote global food security, to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, to alleviate poverty, to improve agricultural productivity and rural development, to support the development of institutions of higher learning that will enhance human capacity, entrepreneurial skills and job creation, agricultural research

> and technology, and the dissemination of farming techniques to all parts of the agriculture sector, and to support sustainable farming methods (sec. 101. Statement of Policy)...[This includes] research on biotechnological advances appropriate to local ecological conditions, including genetically modified technology.[64]

Under the new legislation in the Feed the Future programme $7.7 billion was identified for investment between 2010 and 2014. The bill provides funding for biotech products in the global South, and effectively makes public money available to corporations for research on agricultural biotechnologies that the corporations can then patent and profit from. This was confirmed by Gerald Steiner, Vice President of Monsanto, who, in front of the UK House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee praised the Feed the Future programme for its 'inclusive approach' and 'endorsement of business-enabling policies'. He went on to praise 'its support for public–private partnerships. As the initiative recognizes, the private sector can bring to the table financial and technology resources, cutting-edge business practices, market access and in-country networks to support development.'[65]

Civil society organisations in SSA have argued that the Global Food Security Act promotes partnerships that constitute more active engagement and therefore more control of the food system, with the potential to advance the interests of US agribusiness. In 2010 the anti- GM movement in sub-Saharan Africa protested against the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's $23 million investment by purchasing 500 000 shares in Monsanto, one of the world's largest producers of GM seeds. Additionally, the Gates and Buffett Foundations together have given $47 million in grants to Monsanto for its five-year development project to produce water-efficient maize varieties affordable for small-scale farmers. The way that these kinds of programmes compel farmers to become dependent on external seeds is one of the main concerns articulated in campaigns against GM run by civil society organisations, including global and local protest movements, farmers groups, NGOs, consumer groups and rights-based organisations, such as the international peasant farmers movement La Via Campesina.[66] As a 'politicized movement of agrarians, including landless movements, seed savers...farmers/peasants threatened universally by declining public support, food support and land seizures for agro–industrial estates'[67], campaigners challenge multinational control over agriculture. In particular they dispute whether new technology that is rarely grounded in local knowledge is in fact in the interests of smallholding farmers and peasants, and the assumption that such technology will create food security. They promote instead the use of native seed varieties, as the foundation of locally sustainable rural economies that through biodiversity adapt to changing climates and environments. In solidarity with the African peasants and farmers, Via Campesina has been campaigning against 'hegemonic influence on global agricultural development policy...The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Trust's purchase of Monsanto shares indicates that the Gates Foundation's interest in promoting the company's seed is less about philanthropy than

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about profit-making. The Foundation is helping to open new markets for Monsanto'.[68]

Monsanto has been criticised for offering new seeds for free and then recouping its costs once farmers are dependent on them. The company ruthlessly defends its patent rights, despite criticism that this disregards the interests and well-being of small farmers around the world. This is the corporation that has dismissed small farmers as sheer 'Seed Pirates' and that threatened a group of smallholding farmers in India, the Roushes, with legal action if they did not cultivate their land with Monsanto's seeds, even though they have never signed up to any such contract. They argued that their land appears to have inadvertently been contaminated by nearby cultivators of Monsanto seeds.[69] This is not an isolated case. Monsanto refuses to accept the Roushes' position and is demanding punitive damages for the use of seeds the farmers swear they never sowed...' The Roushes maintain that they are, in effect, being sued for not buying the company's products. So next year, like hundreds of other frightened farmers, they will plant their fields only with Monsanto's GM seeds. Like the opium forced upon a reluctant China by British gunboats, once you've started using GM, you're stuck with it'.[70]

Monsanto's website provides an explanation for its aggressive market-based approach:

> When farmers purchase a patented seed variety, they sign an agreement that they will not save and replant seeds produced from the seed they buy from us. More than 275 000 farmers a year buy seed under these agreements in the United States. Other seed companies sell their seed under similar provisions. They understand the basic simplicity of the agreement, which is that a business must be paid for its product. The vast majority of farmers understand and appreciate our research and are willing to pay for our inventions and the value they provide. They don't think it's fair that some farmers don't pay. A very small percentage of farmers do not honour this agreement ... Sometimes however, we are forced to resort to lawsuits. This is a relatively rare circumstance, with 144 lawsuits filed since 1997 in the United States, as of April 2010. This averages about 11 per year for the past 13 years. To date, only 9 cases have gone through full trial. In every one of these instances, the jury or court decided in our favour ... We pursue these matters for three main reasons. First, no business can survive without being paid for its product. Second, the loss of this revenue would hinder our ability to invest in research and development to create new products to help farmers. We currently invest over $2.6 million per day to develop and bring new products to market. Third, it would be unfair to the farmers that honour their agreements to let others get away with getting it for free.[71]

Conclusion

In this paper I have shown the paradox that exists between neoliberal capitalist philanthropy and business interest. The main motivation for this type of market-based giving is ideological and political. Neoliberal capitalist philanthropic activities are driven by the desire to commodify and marketise

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farmers and peasants and to back a hold on agriculture in SSA by corporate global agri-business chains. This is evidenced by the kind of projects and programmes they support and the actors with whom they partner and share a vision of farming, exemplified by two of the world's most aggressive agri-giants (Monsanto and Cargill). In these cases partnership is one of philanthropy-based business benefit.

Even more concerning is that the New Green Revolution and GM technology in Africa posits itself as a key strategy to address small farmers' and peasants' insecurity and poverty by establishing food security, yet this is being controlled by large multinational corporations and a wealthy few, who are unregulated and unaccountable. There is increasing concern about the legitimacy of neoliberal capitalist philanthropists, given that they are effectively operating as delegated agents of the state but outside of any accountability framework. The agency of small farmers is not being harnessed in this process and therefore it is not clear how social transformation is going to take place that is sustainable. High-profile examples of philanthropist activities are typically targeted at dealing with the symptoms of poverty and not the underlying inequality. Rich philanthropists are content to be concerned with poverty so long as it diverts attention away from their own assets and income and does not threaten the hegemonic structure through which they gain.

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